

**Minutes of a Remote Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7pm**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillor C Marsh (Chairman)  
Councillor J Yelland (Mayor)  
Councillor J Goffey (Chairman, Property)  
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)  
Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Policy & Resources)  
Councillor C Holt  
Councillor M Ireland  
Councillor P Jessop

**Other Members Present:** Councillor D Sanger  
Councillor A Wood

**In Attendance:** Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Mr J McGahey (Park-Keeper)  
Mrs A Horn (Admin Officer)

**Action**

**427**     **Apologies for Absence** – None. It was noted that Cllr Button, who was a member of the committee, was not present.

**428**     **Deferment of Business** – None

**429**     **Mr McGahey, Park-Keeper** – Mr McGahey reported that they had started clearing flower beds and cutting back shrubs and had planted a variety of bulbs that had been donated by a member of the public. A hydrangea and a rhododendron had also been donated.

The phone box had been painted and foundations would be dug the following week ready for installation.

The public footpath to the football club required repair in the next few weeks. The football club had been asked not to permit vehicle access along the pathway, it had been noted that there were often several vehicles parked along the path and on the grass verge.

Last winter's projects had been postponed to this winter due to the pandemic. In addition, it was planned to provide bird boxes and feeding stations. Pest control was resuming and numbers were more controllable.

**430**     **Members' Questions** – None

**431**     **Minutes** - The minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 were **APPROVED** to be signed by the Chairman at a later date on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded Cllr Ireland with amendments removing Cllr Jessop has having seconded the proposal to permit the fair to attend in October and that he seconded the continuation of the boot camp.

**432**     **Matters Arising** –

**432.1**    **CCTV** – It was noted that the system had been approved by Council and a socially distanced meeting had been held last week with the contractor, the electrician was unable to attend. Liaison with a potential monitoring hub

was progressing, and a report would be made to full Council at the end of the month.

Thanks was passed to Cllr Leech for all of the work he had put into the project.

- 432.2 Putting Green** – It was noted that work to enhance the area would resume over the winter.
- 432.3 Fairplace** – Work on the creation of a sensory garden would recommence in spring. The tree in centre had survived despite being delivered on one of the hottest days of the year.
- 433.3 Moor Otter 2020** – The initiative was taking place at Easter 2021.
- 433.4 Hanging Basket Competition** – Noted that the initiative had been cancelled and would be reinstated for 2021.
- 434 Bookings** – Rowlands Funfair had been unable to attend due to the pandemic.
- 435 Antisocial Behaviour and Criminal Damage in Simmons Park** – Mr McGahey reported that it had been quieter with less issues in the last few weeks. Incidents were being reported through the 101 online system as and when they occurred.
- 436 Electrical Work** – It was noted that a contractor had been appointed by Cllr Marsh and the Clerk, inspection and repair work was commencing later in the week.
- 437 RingGo** – On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Goffey (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to accept WDBC's offer to join their scheme and provide the option of a cashless payment system in Simmons Park Car Park. Clerk
- 438 Clapps Wood Footpath Closure** – It was noted that the footpath was closed for 24 hours from 8am on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.
- 439 Ground Lease** – Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest being a Trustee of OCRA.
- On the proposition of Cllr Jessop, seconded Cllr Goffey (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Stephens Scown Solicitors at an unknown cost, as they were already undertaking work for the Council on related matters and were aware of the complexities of the situation, to draw up a ground lease for the pavilion. It was noted that the lease would have to be approved by, and in the name of the Simmons Park Charity and not that of the Council. Clerk
- 440 Budget 2021/22** – The Clerk reported on correspondence received from WDBC which advised the Council should expect a reduction in the tax base of around 2% and that the information would be circulated to Members prior to the budget meetings the following week.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to further review V1 of the budget at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November with no amendments requested at this meeting.

- 441** **Simmons Park Leaflet** – Mrs Horn presented an initial draft outline she had produced for a leaflet promoting the park and its facilities which linked into the new sensory garden at Fairplace. It was commented that the leaflet had great potential giving focus and taking people on a journey through the park. She was asked to continue to work on the leaflet and obtain costs for a final version and its production.

The Clerk advised that she was investigating the feasibility of obtaining a drone fly through video of the park which could be added to the website and facebook page.

- 442** **Roundtable Flower Bed** – Mr McGahey reported that he had been liaising with the Roundtable and they had agreed to adopt, subject to Council approval, a Rose bed adjacent to the bandstand. The Roundtable were happy to donate new plants to add to the bed and replace the any as necessary, along with the provision of materials and any other assistance they could provide.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Roundtable's adoption of the rose bed and to the provision of a sign, subject to agreement by Committee of size and style.

Mr  
McGahey

An item be added to the next agenda for approval of a similar sign on the verge at Westbridge by ORIG for their provision of wildflower seeds.

Clerk

Mr McGahey confirmed that compost used within the park is produced from waste material and that compost was not generally bought in. The weed killer used was bee friendly and he was investigating alternatives for the future.

- 443** **Payment of Invoices** – On the proposition of Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, and the credits were noted.

**444** **Reports of Council Working/Task and Finish Groups -**

- 444.1** **Open Space, Sports & Recreation (OSSR)** – Correspondence received requesting information relating to a Playing Pitch Strategy being drawn up by WDBC and a draft response, previously circulated, was debated.

On the proposition of Cllr Holt, seconded Cllr Ireland it was **RESOLVED** to submit the draft response along with an addition at Q7 noting that any further expansion outside of the town was restricted due to existing planning agreements, and a comment ensuring that similar correspondence had been sent to Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council for their consideration.

Clerk

**445** **Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items -**

- 445.1** **Dartmoor National Park Forum** – Cllr Sanger reported that no meetings had been held

- 445.2** **Everything Okehampton** – Cllr Marsh reported that there was a delay in putting up Christmas trees, the lights had been put up on lampposts and

those that cross the streets were due to be put up later in the week. It was hoped the trees would be put up on 6<sup>th</sup> December, but this was dependent upon the easing of lockdown restrictions. Lions were putting up the tree in Red Lion Yard on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

There would be no light switch on and instead of Edwardian Evening it was hoped to produce a promotional film for businesses encouraging shopping locally.

**445.3** North Dartmoor Search & Rescue – Cllr Ireland advised that no report had been received from the group.

**445.4** Okehampton Community Archive – Cllr Holt reported that they were shut due to the pandemic lockdown and there was nothing to report.

**445.5** Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) – Cllr Tolley reported that the manager been working hard to get OCRA back to normal, but the café had closed again in response to the latest lockdown. 2 new trustees had been recruited and a meeting was being held next week.

**445.6** Parklands Leisure Centre Users Group – No meeting had been held. Cllr Leech reported that the manager had been hoping to get a meeting set up but this had not taken place due to the latest lockdown.

**445.7** Two Museums Walk – Cllr Goffey reported that the museum was now closed until March and they were seeking more trustees. The leaflet had been printed and was available in Sticklepath and the museum. The Polish exhibition had been successful, and the boards were placed in locations around the town.

Item to be removed from future agendas as the leaflet was complete.

Clerk

**446** Urgent Items – The Clerk reported that WDBC had agreed to mirror the 'Free after 3' and Saturday parking throughout December in Simmons Park in the Mill Road car park.

Information about the Pill Box in Simmons Park was requested.

(Mr McGahey and Mrs Horn left the meeting)

## **PART TWO ITEMS**

It was **RESOLVED** that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. Proposed by Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Ireland.

**Action**

**447** Cemetery Management – The Clerk reported that an initial meeting was being held on 17<sup>th</sup> November between members of staff and the ICCM to consider the way forward and start to put policies and processes into place. Training courses for the 3 members of staff had been booked. The solicitor was continuing to work on an agreement with the Church.

**448** Leases and Agreements – The Clerk advised that the transfer of ownership of land from DCC to the College was ongoing, and Cllr Marsh had emailed DCC regarding the situation.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Leech, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part Two.

- 449**     **Urgent Items** – The Clerk reported that she had been advised of a potential sink hole on the roadway leading to the leisure centre. On investigation there appeared to be a void under the accessway to the college adjacent to Parklands and that the land was owned by the College, although responsibility for repairs may fall to WDBC.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

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**Councillor Mrs C Marsh**  
**Chairman**